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Subject: Dissimulating Love.

PLYMOUTH PULPIT:

A Weekly Publication

OF

SERMONS

PREACHED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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DISSIMULATING LOVE.

SUNDAY MORNING, JUNE 20, 1869.

"LET love be without dissimulation."—ROM. xii. 9.

IF disinterestedness is anywhere to be looked for, it is in this great central affection of love. If there be any feeling in the soul incapable of being mercenary, it is this. Many of our faculties are known to be venal. They are easily tempted. They, indeed, are in the market. We are not surprised to be cautioned, therefore, against unworthy devices of ambition; against the tricks of vanity, and its deceits; against the various weaknesses which beset our motives. But one can hardly repress astonishment at the implication that love has ever made traffic of itself. That love has ever been prostituted; that love deceives, and is a dissembler; that this most princely of all the soul's attributes is, after all, bribable, will strike some almost with alarm, as if nothing could be pure, and nothing trustworthy, in man. For, if there be any thing that we have been accustomed to trust more than another—more than reason, more than conscience, which may be under false advisers—it is love, which is said to be not only pure, but a purifier; to be not only true, but an enlightener of the soul. And yet, the implication, "Let love be without dissimulation," sounds out. So unconscious are we of the secrets of the life of the soul, that we shall be very apt to think that the apostle must have had his eye upon the corrupt cities of antiquity, and that this exhortation is to be referred to the times of Nero, and to such morals as ruled in Corinth. I do not doubt that to a certain extent this consciousness of a good intent in loving is founded in truth; but I have as little doubt that all of us, upon a strict examination, will find enough laxity and impropriety in the use and exercise of love, to induce carefulness, and humility, and repentance, and, hereafter, a godly watchfulness.

The principle of love is seldom educated and disciplined in man. It is left as a seedling, not grafted, and is suffered to bear such fruit as it will. Men are taught how to employ every other part of them-

LESSON: 1 Cor. xii. 28-31; xiii. 1-13. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 40, 510, 763.

selves by a sedulous discipline. They are taught how to use their intellectual powers by long and various schooling through different channels, through various sciences, through various studies of language and dialectic arts. Every part, every power, is disciplined, that men may know how finely, acutely, strongly, dexterously, in combination or singly, to use the whole intellectual apparatus. The art of using the reason is made the study and practice of a life. The processes are analyzed. The weaknesses are built up. The illusions are noted. The products are tested and sorted. And the same care, with even finer application, is applied to the imagination. We cultivate the imagination and the taste. In art, in literature, we drill men to a knowledge of good taste.

Even more obviously, men are drilled in conduct; in the use of bodily organs; in good manners; in grace of motion; in dignity of posture; in pace and carriage.

But while we thus educate the reason, the imagination, and the body, very little education is ever bestowed upon the moral sentiments. We give them instruction, but we do not train them. *Training* is teaching how to use knowledge. *Instruction* is knowledge. *Training* is reducing it to practical form. And our higher moral sentiments have very little training. If we except conscience, I apprehend that very little effort is made at the education of these sentiments. They are left to the general inspiration of preaching; to the ordinary course of truth. Love is left to its way, for the most part. Indeed, there are many who deem it a thing most dangerous to meddle with; and children are brought up without the mention of the word in many families. The thing itself is kept shamefaced. Parents and teachers leave love to the romantic climax, when it is allowed to burst into blossom like some vine in the underwood, and then to clamber, at its own sweet will, over whatever thing it meets, be it tree or shrub, stone or rotten trunk.

Men think that the thing is too fiery to be handled beforehand; that there is danger of inflammation in young minds. As if teaching were not the very way to extract the unruly element! Love is regarded as the soul's powder-house, to be kept shut up until the day of action; and neither teacher nor improvement allows itself to enter there with torch or lamp.

No wonder, then, that in the day of trial the affection is wild or wanton, overmeasuring or undermeasuring. No wonder that when brought into the conflict of life, and sorely tempted, it is easily seduced. No wonder that it is left to its own force, as if it were an inexhaustible fountain, filling from its endless stores the whole river of life. No wonder that, so left, it soon dries up, and sometimes falls back upon its source in disgust, or disappears

and throws itself away, as if it were of all life's cheats the most cunning but desperate of deceptions. Or, no wonder that it settles down to a low and weakly growth, like grass much trampled upon, in the highway.

The crudeness and wildness of the human soul is more to be seen in the condition of its nobler affections than in its passions. For the passions of men are nearer perfect, in their way, better educated, more full of power, versatility, and savage beauty, than are the spiritual sentiments of the soul. The least cared for, the least educated, the least developed, are our higher sentiments. But this grandest element of the soul, in which God is most nearly shown, is not a thing to which education is impossible.

Love may be taught as well as inspired. It may be made to ally itself upward, not downward; to choose for itself, and to require in its choices the companionship of reason and the noblest moral sentiments. It may be taught honor as well as purity. It may be taught variety, grace, constancy, disinterestedness, beauty, nobility, divinity.

It is largely because this Eden of the soul is left to itself that temptation overleaps the walls, and soon perverts its innocence, and adulterates the purity of its primitive condition. Little by little, love grows worldly, first in small things, and then in larger; at first occasionally, and then more frequently, and at last habitually. It first uses itself as a lure, as a bait. By and by it is a traffic of life. It grows worldly-wise, and mixes selfishness with fidelity. It grows cunning, and finds that there is a good market for smiles, and for favor, and for grace, and for smoothness of friendship. It resorts to the use of these wiles, and engineers its way to ambition, to profit, and to pleasure, by the barter and sale of the holiest affections.

Think not that I am now describing the soft ways of vice. I am speaking exclusively, and shall exclusively speak, of the faults, of the venal tendencies, of love among those who are respectable—among the best in the best circles of life.

1. Love dissimulates whenever it expressess more than it feels, and for an interested purpose. It dissimulates whenever it lacks equity in exhibition; whenever it does not confine itself within the channels of strict truth; whenever, for a purpose, it exaggerates, and overleaps the bounds of expression. This is a common device of the petty inside life of the household, where love in the main is true, and where its influences in the main are sincere. It is tempted, and not without yielding, to use itself as a rod of discipline, or as the instrument, the key, the sword, the word, the enchanter's sorcery, by which to attain a purpose. We give the general name of *blandishment* to all this mode of using love. It is the use of the voice, of

the eye, and of the hand of love, while the heart is seeking a selfish end. The hands are the hands of Esau; the voice is Jacob's.

The gentle and unstudied ways of pure and simple love have nothing in the world to equal them. The caresses of simple childhood; love among children in their sunshiny hours; parental tones of fondness; the ten thousand scenes of the nursery and of the kitchen, in the plain and homely households of our land among working-men; the timid glances of faithful love, like flowers fallen down from heaven; the beginnings of mature love—all these are among the noblest things which poets can sing; the noblest things which the heart can picture; the noblest things which men can contemplate. There is no occasion for us to look upon these things shamefacedly. The hour of love is the hour of heaven, if it be pure love; if its purpose be pure.

But because these things are beautiful, they are counterfeited. They are used for purposes. The wife would fain stay the anger of the husband, and she throws upon him an affection that she does not at all feel. He would fain charm away her jealousy by a sedulousness and affectionateness of demeanor that has only a purpose in it, and not a heart. She would subdue his obstinacy, and she throws round about him the arms of sweet caress, not because she is drawn really by the need of her heart, nor by the beauty which she sees in him, but because she has the purpose of changing his will and gaining her end. She would unlock the stingy hand that hoards, and she laughs, and sings, and sweetly charms, and uses love as a bait and a barter. She would unlock the gardens of pleasure; and the wicked is made blessed. The very shrew takes music into her voice. The fiery-eyed vixen becomes soft and gentle as a dove. And the man thinks there is reformation in the household, and that nothing is too good for such love. But it was all a price paid to gain pleasure.

Is there no occasion, under such circumstances, to say, "Let love be without dissimulation"? If you would barter any thing, let it not be the heart of God in man. And yet how much there is of this unconsciously going on! How much is there of it that hovers on the edge of design and deceit! How we love what are called the *wiles* of love; what are called the *playful arts* of love! I love the sturdy honesty, I love the simplicity, I love the truthfulness of love; and I abhor the arts and wiles and gayeties of love, that mean something other than they express—that are mere baits for pleasure, or for self-will, or for some interest and purpose.

2. The active appearances of friendship are employed in social life, as oil is in machinery, to reduce the friction of life, and so to increase pleasure. Men are a thousand times more friendly than the

capital of friendship will allow. Men express more friendship than they feel. They behave to each other in a manner which can not be considered other than as deceptive—deceptive even where it is a good-natured habit; but still more deceptive where it has an end in view, as constantly it has.

I do not refer to that general kindness which we ought to express toward all. Cheerfulness, good-will, and ordinary kindness should be universal. It does not follow that you should say to every man just what you think of him. It does not follow, because you believe a man not to be lovely, that you should treat him as if he were a brute. God makes his sun to rise on the just and on the unjust. The serpent warms himself in the morning as really as the lamb. God's benevolence should be the pattern of ours. "Be ye, therefore, perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Divine perfection is the perfection of a being that shows kindliness to every thing; and we are to go into society, not as judges, not as censors, and critics, and condemners, and punishers, in order to maintain our honor and simplicity, as many people think we are to do. Am I obliged to tell every man I meet what I think of him? Am I obliged to tell every man that I converse with all my opinion of him? The law of kindness should check that rash frankness. General good-will you owe to every body. Beyond that you have no right to make traffic of friendship. I do not criticise that etiquette, that general consideration for the comfort of every body, that kindly way, which real high breeding always inspires. That is right. It is not insincere. It comports with the highest reason and with the noblest honesty in moral things. But there is a use made of friendly ways far beyond this. You shall see in society a flattering intensity of favor. You shall see a surprise and an overflowing joy in the countenance. You shall see the whole carriage of a man change, and you shall see him addressing himself to one whom he fain would win, far beyond the friendship that he actually feels. The host should be glad to greet every guest; but what if he stand saying to each one of a hundred those flattering things which leave the conviction in the mind of each that he chiefly, of all the crowd, had been desired as the guest? What if he should impress upon every man the feeling that he had the first place in the heart of his host? And yet, it is considered eminent polish and eminent attainment in the world, to make every man that you meet think that you have more regard for him than for any body else. It is thought to be a very considerable attainment. It is a very *devilish* attainment! It is of the devil. Because it uses the silken fibres of love, it is all the worse. For the higher the feeling with which you sin, the more shameful is the sin. The artful addresses which are con-

tinually made to the weaknesses of man, as if they were virtues—that studious, shrewd, subtle flattery, the flattery of silence; the flattery of surprise; the flattery of a well-timed start; the flattery of an interjection; the flattery of "Oh! Ah!" the flattery of titles and terms; the thousand ways in which men attempt to make their fellow-men feel happy and kindly toward them—all these need to study, night and day, the apostolic injunction, "Let love be without dissimulation." It is not honest. Although there may be a half-consciousness in the victim that all this is feigned, yet it is too sweet to be refused, and he is damaged by it as much as the person that uses it. As one, in the early morning, finds himself moving out of a rare and sweet dream toward waking, and would fain hold on to sleep, and the precious dream, and resents the waking; so do men reluctantly come forth from the cloud of incense which society burns to vanity for the sake of pleasure.

It may perhaps be proper, here, to give some word or hint upon the motive of praise, and compliment, and flattery. Praise is right. It is the expression of our complacency in the well-doing, or well-being of any person. So that it measures itself, or intends to measure itself, by truth and justice, it is not wrong. By *compliment* we mean simply incidental praise. Praise, elegantly termed *compliment*, signifies the quality of art in the matter of praise. For, when one is praised in the ordinary manner, we never say, "He is *complimented*;" we say, "He is *praised*." That is right, if he is praised with discretion. But when one is praised by a nice turn of language, by a figure or a phrase, by some unexpected and elegant expression, we call it a compliment. A compliment is just as right as praise, provided it is conformed to the truth. But a compliment for the sake of appeasing; a compliment for the sake of making a person good-natured; a compliment as a golden coin by which you pay your way and get along easier with a person, is sinful. It is not sincere. It is dissembling admiration and affection. And that is wrong. Flattery, as distinguished from compliment is the indiscriminate praising of one for a sinister purpose. It is not true. It has no regard to metes and bounds. It is an elaborate praising of one for some selfish purpose of your own, special or general, that constitutes flattery. It is about the meanest vice that one can fall into. All these come under this designation, *Dissimulation of love.* They are all of them more or less remotely connected with it.

3. This dissembling some of the phases of love is a lure which both men and women employ for the promotion of their pleasure in life; for the flattery of their own self-love. It is a common trick of life, to inspire those about you with an inordinate opinion of their worth in your eyes. In a thousand graceful ways the coquette of

either sex inspires the victim with the faith of esteem, of admiration, and even of dawning love. Coquettes, in either sense, are alike despicable. They are seeking to draw round about them admirers and followers, that they may receive their incense—the excitement of their compliment and flattery; that they may sit in the warmth of their sweet love. If the lure succeed, they sit regent among admirers, and, like a god, snuff the incense that is offered to their vanity. To all such the apostle's injunction should come most solemnly and warningly, "Let love be without dissimulation."

4. There is a loathsome parasite which fastens on men and upon families. Parasites abound everywhere. Insects feed on insects. Vegetables feed on vegetables. And there are parasites in the human race as well as in the animal kingdom, and in the vegetable tribes. I know of no name that conveys the loathsomeness of this class better than the common name of *toady*. It is the business of such despicable creatures, that have crawled into the household, to suck out their own living by assuming all the airs and practicing all the blandishments of a true, admiring friendship. They are full of starts of admiration. They are full of subtle perceptions of unexpected goodness in you. They praise your words. They take your side in every quarrel. They praise your going out and coming in. They perpetually interpret you to yourself. They are a false mirror in which you are handsomer and more beautiful and more graceful than you are really by nature. If one were so weak as to admire every body and every thing, it would be a weakness on the border of sin; but to do this for a mere purpose; to do it for one's own personal thrift; to despise the man that you pet and praise and flatter; to despise, with bitterness, even, the members of the household that you smear with your oily tongue—this is to be infernal.

There are a great many handsome devils in this world. The devil is said to be horned and hoofed and made hideous; but he is the least homely of any creature that walks on the earth. He becomes an angel of light. And having tried it once, he likes the guise, and continues to enshrine himself in beauty a thousand times more than he does in homeliness.

Such persons are obsequious, supple, oily, cunning, complaisant, and unprincipled. They stop at no falseness. They coin pretenses. They wear all the habiliments of affection only to soil them. They are the bloodsuckers of the heart. And I need not say, as applied to such, the apostolic injunction is terribly pointed, "Let love be without dissimulation."

5. But let us look into the world of business. Drawing aside from the household and domestic scenes, let us see how systematically love is an article of traffic and an instrument of self-interest. See

the cunning confidential clerk, or the still more confidential lawyer, that nestles under the wing of the rich principal. See how in every thing he praises him. See how he seeks his favor; how he avoids his anger; how he subordinates and cripples every element of manhood in himself, that he may still lie close to the favor of his rich patron—and all for his own sake. Have you never seen such creatures? Are there no men that are toadies for gold, sacrificing every element of independence in manhood, for the sake of by and by being able to retire on an ample property? Do you not find them haunting banks? Do you not find them whispering in the ears of directors and boards of managers? Society is full of them. They are despicable. But are there many men that do business who are above the weakness and the crime of using love as a dissembling element?

Tidings comes of the failure of a firm. Large debts are owed; and your establishment is among those to which the most is due. How instantly do you run to the man's side! With what good nature, with what sympathy, you talk of his affairs! How you assure him of your confidence! How you praise his good management! How it was all, doubtless, beyond a peradventure, what he could not have helped! How do you bring him into the utmost good humor! And then, how do you wile out of him a settlement by which you make yourself safe, and leave the other creditors in the lurch, to help themselves as best they may! And yet, a man will hear me on the Sabbath day make applications of this terrible exhortation, "Let love be without dissimulation," and when I apply it to woman, he will say, "Just like the sex. They are all flatterers." But when I say that a merchant will put on all the airs of a toady and a flatterer and a parasite in order that he may manage a rebellious creditor, or save a large debt, or prepare the way for a great success, is it not true? Are you not witnesses that in business men do clothe themselves with all the appearances of favor, of cheerful good nature, of the utmost confidence, of friendliness, yea of almost embracing love, for business purposes?

Ah! not that alone. Has a man come down to the city? Is he plentifully loaded? Is he to make large purchases? Perhaps he is an Indian trader. Perhaps he is some speculator. Perhaps he is a man from abroad who is loading down one or two ships to send home. The one who gets that man gets a *plum!* And straightway is any thing too good for him? What are his vices? His clerk must feed them. What are his weaknesses? Somebody must attend to them. At home is a true, and pure, and noble-hearted wife; but, "My dear, we must have him at our house." She resents it. The man's character is questionable; and the savor of his reputation has come to her. And to

bring him into the household among her children—every true instinct of her nature rises up against it. "But," says the husband, "are you going to stand in the way of my prosperity? My interest depends upon our dining him. Mr. A is going to dine him to-morrow, and Mr. B next day; and he must come to our house to-day." And hospitality has to be bribed, and friendship dissimulated, and sympathy and personal affection put on; so that when the man has been feasted and patted and praised, it shall be easier to drive a good bargain with him. And when the whole game has been played, and the customer is gone, the man smiles, and says to himself, "I angled for him. He was cautious, like a trout under a root; but I threw out the bait, and he rose to it, not thinking that it was a bait, and I landed him!"

"Let love be without dissimulation." If you will parcel out any thing to dissemble with, let it not be love. Let that, at least, be last invaded, which is the highest and best thing which God has ever put into man.

How do we see this carried out upon a large scale! It is organized. It is no longer left to random operations. How do you find that boards of direction carry out, as a part of their schemes, the rites of hospitality! How are legislatures dined and wined! How are they flattered! How are they recipients of all manner of favors! How do men think, at last, that they have become favorites of the gods! When rich, combined capitalists wish to have some road, or some great contract, or some great interest secured to themselves, how do they put on all the guises of sympathy and intense consideration! and how do they flatter men! How do they spin silver and golden webs upon men that they laugh at behind their backs! How, as they sit over their council tables, do they ask, "What have you done to-day? How far have you led that man? What seems to be in his way? What does he want more?" And another man of a softer nature, another man more tender of tongue, and more eloquent of lip, is sent to ply the reluctant victim. And he is plied with flattery and praise until at last the golden wheel rolls without a squeak!

And do men think that is wrong? It is said that, "When a man is in Rome, he must do as Romans do." And when a man is in hell, I suppose, he must do as the hellions do! Though a man pretends to be a Christian, must he, when he goes among men that fight fire with fire, do as they do? If he goes among blasphemers, must he blaspheme? If he goes among Sodomites, must he get down on his knees like four-footed beasts? If he goes among counterfeiters and thieves, must he do as they do? Where will such a maxim as this carry men? It will carry them to the judgment-day and perdition.

Men who are called respectable—men who *are* respectable in a thousand ways, but who are untaught in this regard—because they find that love, when it is properly compounded, and properly used, is one of the most potent, active, and efficient agencies in society, do not hesitate to dissemble it.

And business needs to hear God saying to it, "Let love be without dissimulation." You have no right to employ it dissemblingly. It is a monstrous prostitution of it. It is bribery of the best part of your nature.

6. See how the same thing takes place in ambition. When once a man is bitten with the incurable fever of candidacy, see how at once, and perhaps first of all things, he begins to employ the language, the expressions, of strong personal regard toward every man that has a vote. A man that is hunting a fat office, more, perhaps, than any other one, attempts to make every body believe that he is their friend. It has passed into a proverb that before election "condescension to men of low estate" seems to men to be the very fullness of the Bible. Before election—why, the man, and the man's poor dear wife, and the man's darling little dirty children; before election, the most begrimed cub of the stithy, and the dirtiest collier of the pit, are treated like human beings! Before election, if men were sincere, they would really act like Christians! They "mind not high things." They "condescend to men of low estate." They esteem every man a brother, and would esteem every woman a sister, if she only had a vote. A vote! a vote! Any thing for a vote. They coin their heart and their love, and they pay them out everywhere. They use sympathy, and sentiment, and affection, merely as a bribery to draw in votes. But as soon as the vote has done its work, and the office is secured, and the candidate is well established, what a blessed balm of forgetfulness comes over him! He really does not know any body out of his own set! The hypocrite! If that be not hypocrisy, where is there hypocrisy on earth? We laugh at it when we see it in small men; but what if we see it in large men? What if we see men who stand eminent using every artifice to secure influence?

Here is one of these men. Some promising young man visits the town. He is a rising young lawyer of the country. He is the most popular young man in Albany; or he is one of the finest young men in Brooklyn. And this man says, "Bring him, and introduce him to me." It is done, quietly, and the young man is made a good deal of, and he feels flattered, and he goes home, and says, "I did not know that I was of any consequence in the world; I did not know that I had been heard of; but that man knew me. He asked after my father and mother." Ah! if that man has not a defender in this young

man now! The young man feels, "I have a friend in that man. I would go to the end of the continent to serve him. I hope I may live to vote for that man for President." The young man is gulled. His place is not cold before there is another man sitting in it, and taking the same sweet soup!

Has a young man made a speech? Forthwith comes a letter:

"DEAR SIR: I have read with the utmost enjoyment the sentiments that you uttered. Though I have often thought the same things, I never could have so well expressed them. I am, with fervent admiration, Your obedient servant."

The young man says, "Well! I knew I was smart; but I did not suppose I was a genius." And oh! that letter! He takes it home, and shows it to his wife. That letter, from one of the foremost men in the land! There is no place too good for it. He puts it in the drawer; but he can not resist going every now and then to see if it has not been taken out by accident. That letter! It goes to his heart. How sweet it is to him! By and by this distinguished man meets him, and proposes that he should travel with him. And he takes him into his seat in the cars. And he leaves the young man feeling that a god has been by his side.

This is done, not once, not twice, not thrice; but life is made up of the doing of such things. And what for? For the gratification of men's ambition to sit in the highest places. And I ask you, is it any better because it is done by intelligence, by genius, by eminence? If one would be obscene, the higher he goes to make an exhibition of obscenity, the worse it is; and wickedness in high places is a thousand times more wicked than wickedness in low. Ah! these men that have no other use for their hearts—I had almost said, these fishers of men, that take their hearts, and cut them up for bait, and put them on angling-hooks to catch men with—how despicable they are!

I shall not go lower. I shall not go into the region of avowed vice. I have purposely kept in the region of respectability in society. I have not enumerated half the ways of prostituting love to selfish uses; but I have, I suppose, said enough to show you that there was need of this exhortation, and that there is still need of it. I have said enough, I trust, to put you upon self-examination, and to lead you to suspect that you have not yourself been as clean and circumspect in the uses of love as you should have been. I hope I have at least made you feel, "There is danger in that direction, and I must set up a watch there."

In closing, let me say, then, that every man should be jealous of his affection, and every man should set honor as doorkeeper of his

heart, to see to it that it is not debased. If there be no other part of your nature that is kept honest, let love at least be honest. If there be no other part of your nature that is true, at least let love be true. If you will bring guile and craft into the lower part of your nature, if you are not strong enough to rule out those parts that are most in contact with the world, let there be a sanctuary somewhere, and let that be the affection in your heart. Let that be kept pure, undissembling. And as one grows older, let him be more and more in earnest to maintain the sanctity of love. You may build there.

It is said that the oppressed Jews—and they have been more oppressed than any other people on the globe—clothed in mean rags, looking like poverty and death, were wont to drag their filthy way home, up some obscure alley, and then through miserable rooms, as to a foul nest, opening door after door; but that when they got in far enough to be beyond the intrusion of the police, they came to gorgeous apartments, where wealth and beauty reigned and flamed; and that there they threw off their ignoble weeds, and robed themselves in beauteous apparel, and sat as men. Let it be so, at least, in the apartments of love. If you go through narrow streets, and foul, through the lower apartments of your nature, poor and miserable, let there be far back a door which, opening, shall reveal to you all the beauty of love—its purity, its divinity.

As one grows older, he ought not to grow poorer. Rivers do not grow shallower as they roll away from the fountain, but deeper as they near the ocean; and surely, the heart's river ought not to be an exception. It should roll with broader channel and deeper banks till it reaches the ocean, and mingles with it.

The degradation of the altar of the soul should be abhorred as a very sacrilege. We should teach our children this truth. It should be the teaching of the school; and it should go out of the school into the business of life. And men should be taught a principle of honor, even of conscience, in regard to this degradation of the altar of the soul. It is sacrilege to rob an earthly temple. Is it not sacrilege to rob God's temple?

If the highest part of our nature is so low and contemptible, what must the lowest be? If our very affection, if love itself, is guilty of dissimulating, what must be the practice of our less watched and less guarded feelings? If we have more need of thorough cleansing here, how much more need have we of watching our more obvious and worldly feelings. Do we not here, do we not everywhere, Christian brethren, need to say, "Search me, O God! and try me, and see if there be any evil in me"? These subtle weaknesses of the soul elude men's grasp and analysis; and here,

more than anywhere else, one feels the need of the cleansing of the Divine Spirit, and inspiration in what is true, and right, and pure, and beautiful. And teaching these qualities also strengthens us to possess them.

May God grant that we may grow in the spirit of true love; grow finer and richer in it; and grow more various, more copious in its exhibitions. May love, given, be as the very fruit plucked from the tree of life; and withheld, may it be a witness to men which shall awaken them to a sense of their ill-desert. May we be kept from the traffic of the soul. May our "love be without dissimulation."

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

THOU hast called us, our Father; we have come at thy voice; and what do we here without thee? Vain are our oblations, and all our service dies in the ear and upon the lip. Thou, O God! must breathe thy life upon us, which shall give meaning to all our service, and profit to every endeavor. Thou hast nourished us all the days of our lives. Our health, our strength, and the comforts which abound on every side, are testimonies of thy nourishing care. And is all thy thought expended upon the outward? Dost thou build us up in body, and not care for the soul? We are the temples of God. Dost thou not care for the altar? Look within, we beseech of thee, this morning; and grant, in addition to all the other mercies which we are receiving, the light and the joy of thy heart in our hearts. Teach us the royal road of divine love. Teach us to find thee consciously. Be present to our thoughts. Our eye aches in searching for thee, and our ear is tired with listening for the sound of thy footsteps, and thou art not anywhere. Reaching the hand out at midday, it is as if it were midnight; for we grope in vain. Thou wilt not appear to the body. Thou art not for it. Teach us, then, to reach out other hands, to open other eyes, to listen with another sense within, and to recognize the presence of our God in the soul. May we know how to find the formless God, to discern the invisible, and to hear the inaudible. Help us this day, we beseech of thee; for thou canst. Speak thy thoughts to us. Call each one of us by name. Make thyself known to us. Who can search the heart but thou, O our God? We shall know thee if thou dost search our hearts. Thou dost touch the place of life, and only thou canst do it. Thou hast, in times gone by, many times, blessed be thy name! revealed thyself thus interiorly to us. We know thee. We have risen up with the ardor of every affection, and acclaimed thee not only God above, but *our* God. We have in silence and in the shadow of the soul clasped thee unrebuked. Thou hast not said to us, "Touch me not." We have rejoiced in the fullness of communion with thee. We have risen more refreshed than flowers in the morning by the dew which the night hath poured upon them. We rest upon thee more than upon the bosom of any other love. We rejoice in thee more than when food or wine hath strengthened us. For thou art more than bread, and more than the water of life. Thou art all in all. Whatever our senses crave, whatever our affections crave, whatever our noblest sentiments crave, whatever our imagination and our understanding crave — all, and more than this, thou art. And when we are full and overflowing, still thou art not empty. Though all living

creatures upon the earth draw from thee their supply, thou art not exhausted, and thou art still tending and nourishing, and art not weary. Thou never faintest nor turnest back. From eternity still moving forward to eternity, thou art the unchangeable and the inexhaustible. And we rejoice in thee.

Once more, this morning, together we desire to renew our covenants and our vows, to confess our sins, to humbly supplicate thy forbearance and thy pardon, and to beseech thee for grace to inspire and help us in time to come, that we may not stumble at the accustomed places; that we may be able to gain victories over our victors; that we may lead captivity captive. We beseech of thee that thou wilt fill us with thy presence, by which we may be able to overcome doubt and fear and discouragement. May we not be afraid of any thing. Let not the threat and the sin of the world alarm us. As birds in the interior forest do sing on though the battle may rage in the fields beyond, so may there be that within us which shall sing amidst the strife and struggle and turmoil of this wicked world. Grant, O Lord! that we may not be afraid of life, nor of any of its embattled powers. And still less may we be afraid of death. May we look upon it with more comfort than children look upon the coming of the twilight hour. Oh! that we may look away from the realm of our senses. Oh! that we may not be cast down. Forbid that they shall interpret to us the meaning, the sweetness, the power, the revelations of the dying hour. Oh! for that love of truer manhood which shall make us willing to be borne through the grave. Oh! for such yearnings for purity, and beauty, and virtue, and holiness, and communion with God, as shall make us gladly pilgrims of the night, seeking the everlasting morning. Oh! take away from us the stain and disfigurement and misinterpretations and slanders which fear and heathenism have cast upon dying. And whether it come by slow approach, as music coming from afar, or whether it come with sudden stroke, grant that we may not shrink. May we be glad to stay, if it be thy will, though homesick. May we be willing to labor, though weary. May we be willing to struggle, though so often vanquished. And yet, may we be glad to go, and look for joy, and wait for the opening of the door through which we shall pass swiftly, and leave sickness and sorrow and sin behind. And we beseech of thee, O Lord our God! that thou wilt grant the triumph of our faith in all the conditions in which we are placed in life. Grant that we may have a virtue that is stronger than wealth, and be able to subdue it, and not be contaminated by it. May we have that love and power of faith which is stronger than refinement; and may we not be selfish through refinement. May we overcome, by the faith of Christ, the seductions of pleasure and the temptations of knowledge, and be able to spoil the world, and, as victors, bear off the spoils. Grant, we beseech of thee, that we may be able to take the full faith of a perfected manhood, and all the conditions of perfected society, and not be degraded by them. And may we lift them up, and shine upon them with a holy life, and make them strong and mighty for the work of God in all the earth.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt draw near to all thy churches. Quicken thy ministering servants, and give them more faith, and give them deeper inspiration, and a truer hold upon the divine life. More and more encourage them. May they sow seed. May they be blessed in their seed-sowing, by the abundant harvests which they ere long shall reap. Strengthen the churches that are weak; and multiply them. Send everywhere, into regions where there is emigration, men that shall build up the school, the college, and the church. And grant that knowledge, virtue, and piety may prevail throughout all this land.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt make this people a God-fearing people, and

man-loving people. And may we not seek for the things that shall show our ain strength. May we not desire quarrel or war. May we be temperate, and nsider not our own interests alone, but the whole welfare of man. May we not e easily provoked. May we not think evil. May we *love all things.* May we *dure all things.* May we remember that the hand of violence can not strike ithout destroying the poor and needy. May we remember that war despoils the nocent and the helpless more than the oppressor. We beseech of thee that thou ilt take out of the minds of all people the insane fury of war. And grant that rtue, and justice, and liberty, and intelligence, and true piety may supplant vio- nce. And so may superstition and ignorance flee away, and the bright coming thy kingdom dawn upon the world, like the morning upon the mountains.

Wilt thou hear us in these our petitions, and answer us, for Christ Jesus' ke. *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech of thee that thou wilt bless the word of truth; and ant that it may be true to the conscience and to the understanding of every one at has heard it. May we be held away from temptations. May we be strength- ed, if temptations still come upon us, to resist and overcome them. May we be ore solicitous for our manhood than for our estate. May we be more anxious to and right with God than to have the favor of man. May we desire our salva- on hereafter more than our prosperity now. May we have thy favor, the light thy countenance, and the joys of thy salvation. We ask it for Christ's sake. *men.*

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